

A Perfect Picture of Hell: Eyewitness Accounts By Civil War Prisoners From the 12Th Iowa

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nority in the wake of the War of 1812. The ascendant Republican majority broke into factions during the Panic of 1819 and the Missouri Crisis. National Republicans demanded federal economic intervention, sided with the Northeast in the debate over slavery, and won the election of 1824 under the aegis of Adams and Henry Clay. Jacksonians, however, seized on the emerging partisan divisions to recruit new voters. By 1828, voter turnout had more than doubled to sweep Jackson into office. Ratcliffe concludes that multiple factors intersected during the formative crisis to ground the new parties simultaneously within socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, community, and personal dimensions. The early political imprint, forged in the early 1820s, persisted for the next generation.

The Politics of Long Division is the most comprehensive analysis of popular politics in Ohio during this and indeed any period of history. The book benefits from the author's decades of experience with the topic and impressive familiarity with the relevant source material, primarily manuscripts and newspapers. The narrative bristles with insights into prominent personalities and local political events while presenting a political process wracked by far greater complexity and subtlety than previously imagined. It proves less persuasive when addressing the state and national levels. Ratcliffe does, however, undermine the sometimes false clarity of previous interpretations. His contribution here is to provide a model of political analysis that recommends a closer look at local and personal factors and an earlier starting point for popular participation.

A Perfect Picture of Hell: Eyewitness Accounts by Civil War Prisoners from the 12th Iowa, edited by Ted Genoways and Hugh H. Genoways. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2001. xiv, 337 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, biographies, bibliography, index. \$42.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Garold L. Cole is professor emeritus at Illinois State University, Normal. His latest book is *Civil War Eyewitnesses: An Annotated Bibliography of Books and Articles, 1986-1996* (2000).

A Perfect Picture of Hell is an anthology of diaries, letters, and memoirs written by soldiers of the 12th Iowa Infantry about their experiences in Confederate prisons. Between April 6, 1862, and July 15, 1864, members of the regiment were captured in battles at Shiloh, Corinth, Jackson, and Tupelo and incarcerated at the infamous prisons of Libby, Belle Isle, Cahaba, and Andersonville, as well as at lesser known locations in Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida. To my knowledge, this is the only scholarly book to focus on the prison experiences of a single regiment.

In their narratives, the soldiers relate their views of the battles in which they were captured, of being shuttled between prisons, of living conditions at the camps, of attempted escapes, of cruel treatment by guards, and of the circumstances of their release. The editors selected accounts that were representative of the prison experiences of the 12th Iowa Infantry, rather than include all extant accounts. The narratives written by men captured at Shiloh are most numerous, providing different perspectives of memorable events.

The accounts, arranged in chronological order, represent a microcosm of the problems that both sides had with handling captured enemies. As the editors explain in their prologue, the war began with a simple parole and exchange agreement and evolved into the more complex Dix-Hill cartel in July 1862. By May 1863, however, general agreements had collapsed, and widespread exchanges ceased until the end of the war. Because more than half of the narratives in this work were written when exchange agreements existed, these experiences serve to document flaws in the early systems. For example, in late May 1862 one boatload of privates captured at Shiloh was on its way to be exchanged, only to be refused because Union authorities lacked the necessary provisions to care for them. At about the same time, a commission of three officers held prisoner at Madison, Georgia, was allowed to travel to Washington to plead with government officials and President Abraham Lincoln to achieve a system of exchange with the Confederacy. The mission was unsuccessful, but the lone officer who returned to the Madison prison brought money and letters to distribute among the prisoners. And, while awaiting release at the parole camp at Benton Barracks, Union soldiers created disturbances because they believed that the terms of their parole agreement had been violated by Union authorities.

The Confederacy was never able to care for its prisoners adequately, but these accounts describe how conditions worsened as the war raged on. The first prisoners from Shiloh were broken into three groups by rank and sent to different camps. The treatment officers received was far superior to that afforded the privates, but all expected and received paroles within a few months. As the accounts written from Cahaba and Andersonville describe, however, by 1864 shortages of space and supplies within the Confederacy condemned all prisoners to inadequate treatment, and hope for exchange became an elusive dream.

The narratives included are informative and well written, and the editorial effort is outstanding. In addition to an obviously tireless search for the best accounts among printed and manuscript sources, the editors have added endnotes, illustrations, and maps, and com-

piled biographical sketches of the major individuals mentioned in the accounts. The prologue and introductions to sections provide invaluable continuity to the many narratives, so that all the prison experiences of the 12th Iowa Infantry may be read as one.

Colonel Heg and His Boys: A Norwegian Regiment in the American Civil War, by Waldemar Ager, translated by Della Kittleson Catuna and Clarence A. Clausen. Travel and Description Series 13. Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 2000. vii, 262 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, appendix, index. \$24.95 cloth.

Reviewer Stephen Engle is professor of history and director of graduate programs at Florida Atlantic University. He is the author of several books and articles on leading Civil War military figures, including *Struggle for the Heartland: The Campaigns from Fort Henry to Corinth* (2001).

Waldemar Ager's *Colonel Heg and His Boys* provides invaluable material on the role of the Norwegian Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment's involvement in the Civil War. It is not, however, a history of the regiment. More than half of the volume is taken up by the diary of Colonel Hans Christian Heg, detailing the role he and his regiment played in the war and the battles in which his unit was engaged. Colonel Heg and his boys fought mainly in the war's western theater, participating in the battles of Chickamauga and Stone's River. The latter portion of the volume includes short essays and incidental observations by Heg on particular battles and the Norwegian Regiment's losses. He also includes letters from other Norwegian soldiers in the 15th Wisconsin, detailing their experiences and impressions of the war.

Students of the Civil War will find this a welcome addition to the growing body of literature focusing on the ethnic dimensions of the conflict and how midwestern ethnic groups contributed to the effort to preserve the Union.

The Civil War's Last Campaign: James B. Weaver, The Greenback-Labor Party and the Politics of Race and Section, by Mark A. Lause. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001. viii, 256 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendix, index. \$33.00 cloth.

Reviewer Wallace Hettle is associate professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. He is the author of *The Peculiar Democracy: Southern Democrats in Peace and War* (2001).

Mark Lause's book traces the 1880 presidential campaign of Iowa congressman James B. Weaver on the Greenback-Labor ticket. The title of

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